In Memoriam

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Benjamin Lawton Wiggins

IN MEMORIAM

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BENJAMIN LAWTON WIGGINS

VICE-CHANCELLOR

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MEMORIAL ADDRESSES

DELIVERED AT THE SERVICES
HELD IN ST. AUGUSTINE'S CHAPEL
THURSDAY, JUNE 17, 1909
IN MEMORY OF

BENJAMIN LAWTON WIGGINS

M. A., LL. D.
VICE-CHANCELLOR OF
THE UNIVERSITY OF THE SOUTH

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THE UNIVERSITY PRESS OF
SEWANEE TENNESSEE

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INTRODUCTION

Univ. of the South

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INTRODUCTION

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BENJAMIN LAWTON WIGGINS was born at Sand Ridge, South Carolina, September 11th, 1861, the son of James and Elizabeth B. (Mellard) Wiggins, and was prepared for College in the Porter Military Academy, Charleston, S. C. He was graduated from the University of the South in 1880, received his M.A. degree in 1882, and became Professor of Greek the same year. In 1883-84 he took a post-graduate course in Johns Hopkins University, and in 1893 he was elected Vice-Chancellor of the University of the South.

For fourteen years he administered the affairs of the University with consummate vigor and ability; but in 1907 he began to show symptoms of failing health, due, as it afterwards transpired, to an incurable disease of the heart.

Despite his daily increasing physical weakness he persisted in his work; and when the Board of Trustees met, June 12th, 1909, he insisted upon appearing before them and reading his annual report.

The following night, Sunday, June 13th, he had a violent seizure and the next day, Monday, June 14th, 1909, at 5 o'clock P.M. (at the very moment when his friend, who had consented to take his place temporarily, was making his speech of accep-

tance to the Board), Dr. Wiggins quietly passed away.

The body was taken to the University Chapel at 7 A.M. on Wednesday, June 16th, and lay there in state attended by a Guard of Honor. At 7:30 A.M. there was a celebration of the Holy Communion, at which the Chancellor of the University officiated. At 5 P.M. the first part of the Burial Office was read in the Chapel by the Bishops of Atlanta and Florida, and the Bishop of Tennessee, the Chancellor, took the Service at the grave.

Special trains came from Nashville, Chattanooga, and intermediate points, bringing many friends and representatives of organizations of which Dr. Wiggins was a member.

On Thursday morning, June 17th, the Commencement exercises took place in the Chapel, without the accustomed speeches ; and diplomas, degrees and prizes were conferred.

At 11 A.M. a Memorial Service was held at which seven Bishops were present, and many clergy and laymen, both of the Board of Trustees and of the Diocese of Tennessee, of which diocese Dr. Wiggins had been a representative in the General Convention for fourteen years.

The Chaplain of the University, the Rev. A. R. Gray, read the Creed and Prayers, and the four addresses here printed were delivered ; the first by the Chancellor ; the second by the Bishop

of South Carolina, representing the Board of Trustees; the third by the Bishop of Mississippi, representing the Alumni; and the fourth by the Rev. W. P. DuBose, S.T.D., representing the Hebdomadal Board of the University.

In conclusion the great congregation united with the Chancellor in the recitation of the Lesser Litany.

Pretiosa in conspectu Domini Mors Sanctorum.

ADDRESS OF THE RIGHT REVEREND THOMAS FRANK GAILOR, S.T.D., D.D., BISHOP OF TENNESSEE AND CHANCELLOR OF THE UNIVERSITY

ADDRESS OF BISHOP GAILOR

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THIS University has been created out of the lives of men. The hopes and aspirations, the thoughts and purposes, the sacrifices and self-denials, of human souls have fed and nourished and sustained it until now; and, when from time to time it has had to say "Good-bye" to one of its loved and loving ones, it has straightway felt in its blood the new vital force, which the spent life had contributed to it.

And once more Sewanee has had to stand by a new-made grave and assert her faith. Once more the Lord God has seen fit to test the quality of her spiritual fibre, and to put on trial the reality and permanence of her Christian hope. "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." Brethren: the fierce assault of bitter and stunning grief is laying bare to-day the bed-rock of that Foundation. If it is sure, we need not be afraid.

May not the very magnitude of our bereavement be taken as the evidence and measure of our University's success? For the great and noble Vice-Chancellor, whose life we are commemorating, was, in every respect of mental, moral and spiritual character, a product of Sewanee. Only forty years has the University of the South been in actual existence, and yet, in that short time, it has borne and bred a son, whose trained intellect, whose scholarly equipment, whose disciplined

character and lofty ideals, fitted and enabled him, not only to occupy, but to fill, the place of a leader to his own Alma Mater, and that in a manner and to a degree worthy of her most exalted and exacting traditions and standards.

His signal ability commanded the respect and honor of the world of learning. His unstudied and unfailing courtesy, his abounding kindness, his loving heart, his refinement of manner and thought and feeling, consecrated by the grace of God, won for him a great army of friends, who mourn for him to-day in every section of the country and in every condition of life.

Lawton Wiggins was a rare personality,—graceful and gracious, sensitive and modest, and yet, with it all, firm, fearless, masterful, commanding. "His strength was gentle, his gentleness was strong."

To this University he gladly, lovingly, simply, utterly gave his life. From that purpose he never swerved. Many exceptional offers of advancement, many invitations, aye even urgent appeals—to high place and lucrative office elsewhere, he put aside with characteristic persuasiveness and charm, resolute in his faith. He believed in Sewanee. He had invincible confidence in this institution,—in its ideals and its destiny. And he being dead yet speaketh.

Therefore to-day the University, which made him what he was ; which for nearly thirty strenuous, battling, fruitful years, held his enthusiastic

and complete devotion; that University has cause to thank God for what she gave our people in Doctor Wiggins' life and character, and to look forward into the future, with eyes, tearful indeed, but undimmed and unafraid.

Alas, my Brother: I look back to-day through twenty-seven years of interest and service with him for this University, when we walked together in the House of God as friends.

And — I shall never look into his eyes again or clasp his hand in mine! God help us; How strange and sad and terrible is the mystery of death!

Yet the message and challenge of his life is plain. We shall not forget. As we loved him, we shall love Sewanee. For him the struggle-storm is over and the fever past. For him all the burdens have been lifted and all the problems solved:

> A veil betwixt us only; he in the light serene,
> He knows how sorrow blossoms, how peace is won from pain.

By and by we shall meet him, and be with him; and we shall tell each other of this warfare as we dwell together in God's peace.

ADDRESS OF THE RIGHT REVEREND THEODORE DuBOSE BRATTON, D.D., BISHOP OF MISSISSIPPI, ON BEHALF OF THE ASSOCIATED ALUMNI

ADDRESS OF BISHOP BRATTON

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TO choose for one's self early in life an ideal, and to strive absorbingly to realize it, is the first necessary step toward the only goal worth attaining in this life — viz., a useful life, a life of ministry for God and for one's fellow man. The choice of an ideal came early in the life of our beloved Wiggins. Certainly it would have been impossible either for him or for his friends to predict the wonderfully complete measure of the fulfillment of his ideal which the contemplation of his life to-day reveals.

I remember well the day on which the "Porter Boys," as we called them, arrived on the Mountain, for that day marked the beginning of a friendship with Wiggins which continued to grow more and more into loving intimacy and confidence as the years passed. From the very start Wiggins, though not the most gifted nor the brightest in our set, was easily the best student, and soon rose to the head of his classes. He was the steadiest, the most regular, the most painstaking student I ever knew, and soon became the most accurate and discriminating classical scholar of my day. In the winter of 1878 it was necessary for me to remain at home for duty during the last scenes of our pitifully tragic Reconstruction era in my native State. Returning later, my former fellow-student was my tutor in the classics, he having been selected by his professor for this duty.

This, however, did not in any way interfere with the friendship and intimacy which, after two years of interruption, was renewed immediately. It is not too much to say that as I look back thoughtfully upon the entire period of my student life, the verdict of my experience is that Wiggins was the peer of the best teachers I ever knew. The boy of the '70's had ripened into the young man of the '80's, his habits of careful, accurate scholarship and conscientious attendance upon duty fully matured. The compelling sympathy and contagious enthusiasm so irresistible to his pupils, combined with his peculiar aptness to teach, made him, if not the very best, certainly the most interesting and inspiring teacher of languages I ever knew — and what he was as tutor he afterwards became in the larger sphere of professor. It was this remarkably successful career as teacher, and the unqualified sense of confidence both in his abilities and character shared by all his former fellow-students, that combined to compass his election to the Chair of Ancient languages through the persistent demand of the Alumni which would not be stilled until the Trustees acceded to their wish. The proceeding was unusual and has never been repeated in our history, so far as I know.

I do not know if there be any here who know that he once contemplated taking Orders. I well remember our talks on this subject and his final conclusion which launched him upon his educational career from which he never again swerved. His

call to his Professorship and to the service of his Alma Mater by the unanimous and constraining voice of his fellows was rightly regarded by him as too altogether singular to be without sacred significance. It discovered to him the ideal of his life, and in pursuing it he gave his best self, day by day, to the task. *Life* to him was *ministry.*

From this all-too-brief sketch of his early Sewanee life, my brothers of the Alumni will discover the secret of that wonderfully close relation which Wiggins bore to us all. He was our first Alumnus on the Faculty, literally put there by his brothers. He was our first-fruits offered to the beloved Mother. He, the modest boy (he was just twenty-one, I think), in his own eyes the untried boy, shrinking from both the honor and the responsibility which his fellows forced upon him, was the first among his brethren chosen to win the victory of high service and deserved distinction. Others had served us in less conspicuous posts, others who were destined to achieve distinction in the world of science and letters and religion. But it was Wiggins, the true, loyal, faithful, able, steady youth of our love and our pride who was thought worthy to be the offering of her sons to the Alma Mater in the day of her greatest need. There are some of us here who well remember the ghastly depression of that period, of a defeated Board of Trustees and a grandly loyal Faculty, when, but for the devotion of the latter, our doors would have been closed and the splendid ideal of

our fathers forever lost. It was at this moment that Wiggins was offered both as the pledge of our undying love for our Alma Mater and as the best that we had to offer. This, I know, was the spirit of his great heart's motive, that he had been offered up upon the altar of love. Was it strange that he should henceforth decline all efforts to lure him away from this Mountain-top? Was it strange that such a man as Wiggins should find his complete satisfaction in a life of sacrifice to the cause to which both he and his brothers had consecrated him?

Many of us doubtless have forgotten, and many more never knew, the sacredness of the tie which bound him to us and impelled his willing service at all times, of the Association of which he was in so signal a manner the heart and light. But he never forgot. Through all the years of struggle with Sewanee's poverty he did the day's duty with all his heart and strength and wrested victory where less stout hearts and weaker hands and lives unconsecrated, would have relinquished the unequal contest. From first to last his life has been one of consistent and persistent self-sacrifice.

Brothers of the Alumni, the example of Wiggins' life must not be lost to us. Other there are deserving of as much honor and reverence, but Wiggins was one of us. He belonged to us. In a special sense he has represented twenty-seven years of our devotion to our Alma Mater. He is our vicarious sacrifice—a sacrifice which must be

justified by that which we his brothers shall continue in our striving to realize the absorbing purpose of Wiggins' life.

In such a connection I pass over, with a mere hint of the facts, the record of the offices he held in our Association. To him an office was never only what it is in itself—it was the occasion for service and the condition of duty. His life has been an example of steadiness of purpose, of devotion to an ideal, of self-forgetful love for our Alma Mater, of unswerving fidelity to the trust bestowed by his fellow-students. His death is a call to duty, to the re-awakening of love in us, to the renewing of our own consecration to the ideal which our great and beloved Alma Mater represents, and for which our beloved Wiggins laid down his life!

ADDRESS OF THE RIGHT REVEREND WILLIAM ALEXANDER GUERRY, D.D., BISHOP OF SOUTH CAROLINA, REPRESENTING THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

ADDRESS OF BISHOP GUERRY

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I BELIEVE that I am the only one here officially connected with the University whose acquaintance with our late beloved Vice-Chancellor antedates his coming to Sewanee. We were boys together at the Porter Military Academy, Charleston, S. C., in 1876. I have been his friend for more than thirty-three years. I have both studied with him as his fellow-student in the same school, and I have studied under him as one who was proud to be called his pupil.

It is most fitting then that I should stand here to pay my tribute of love and respect to his revered memory not only because of the long and intimate relations which have existed between us, but also because on this occasion I have the honor to represent both his native State and Diocese, as well as the members of the Board of Trustees. I shall not, of course, in the brief space allowed me attempt to give anything like an adequate estimate of his life and labors. That task is reserved for the future historian of the University who, with all the facts before him, shall estimate correctly the permanent contribution which Dr. Wiggins has made to Sewanee and to the great cause of Christian education.

There is, however, one quality of his mind and heart of which I wish to make special mention here, because I believe that it was the most distinctive, the most fundamental, and the most

widely recognized and accepted characteristic of the man. I refer to his large-hearted, large-minded and never-failing charity. He was the most forgiving, the most forbearing, and the most uniformly kind gentleman I have almost ever known. He was without malice. He seemed incapable of bearing ill-will or of harboring resentment against anyone. He was truly great in the absolutely impersonal way in which he could view any question and discuss any subject solely upon its merits and quite independently of the attitude of mind or character of those who agreed with or differed from him.

No man ever administered a great trust or occupied his high position with less friction, or who possessed in a greater degree the happy faculty of reconciling differences and of enabling men of many different temperaments and points of view to work harmoniously together in one great cause, than our late Vice-Chancellor. His charity was not due to lack of conviction or to mere amiability of disposition, but to a deep and sincere love for his fellow-men, coupled with the greatness of his intellect and the breadth of his sympathies, which gave him his remarkable insight into human nature, and that warm, loving and personal interest which he took in the affairs of all those who were in any way associated with him. I venture the assertion that there is no one within the sound of my voice, who has lived at Sewanee in recent years, who has not at some time experienced his kindness or been

indebted to him for some act of more than ordinary thoughtfulness and generosity.

For this reason he was to me the greatest living embodiment of the truth of the words of our motto, *Ecce quam bonum*— "Behold how good and joyful a thing it is, brethren, to dwell together in unity." Those clasped hands upon the seal of the University surmounted by the cross of the living Christ are a most fitting and most beautiful symbol of his life.

There is much more that I could say and much more that I would like to say. But to me the thing by which I will remember him longest and for which I love him most is that greatest of all the Christian virtues—Charity. "Now abideth these three: Faith, Hope, Charity. But the greatest of these is Charity." Surely no words could more fittingly and appropriately be applied to him than those of the Epistle for this week which were read at the early service yesterday morning when his body lay in state in this chapel: "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and every-one that loveth is born of God and knoweth God." (I St. John, iv. 7.)

May we not then venture to believe that because of his great love for his fellow men and for his Father in Heaven, Benjamin Lawton Wiggins is permitted to behold the King in his beauty, Who with Thee, O Father, and Thee, O Holy Ghost, liveth and reigneth ever, one God, world without end.

ADDRESS OF THE REVEREND WILLIAM PORCHER DuBOSE, S.T.D., DEAN EMERITUS OF THE THEOLOGICAL DEPARTMENT OF THE UNIVERSITY, REPRESENTING THE HEBDOMADAL BOARD

ADDRESS OF DOCTOR DuBOSE

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I INTERPRET this solemn function in which we are here to engage as an act of recognition and acknowledgement of the most direct and complete gift of a life yet made to Sewanee;—and again, on Sewanee's part, as an offering up of the costliest sacrifice of her life that she has yet laid upon the altar of service as she sees it. For the life that has just gone up from our midst was about as completely that of Sewanee itself as it was possible for it to have been made; as much of the complex total of community life here had been drawn and concentrated into it as could have been in one mortal man. Sewanee was himself to its Vice-Chancellor, and as much as he could, he made himself Sewanee.

This came about, if to a very unusual extent, yet in a very gradual and natural way. Benjamin Lawton Wiggins came here a boy fresh from school and at the earliest age at which he could have entered the University. The day of his entrance was the beginning of that series of eminent services which have just ended—if they have ended. The very first was not the least of these services. I have had occasion to think much, and sometimes to talk, of the Makers of Sewanee. Not least or fewest of these have been students—and I do not mean students after they had left here; but students while they were here. There is nothing that so makes an institution like this as the current

quality, character, and active coöperation and contribution of its student body. We have often been able to say things deeply gratifying to ourselves of our student body as a class, as a whole. But there have always been students who have stood out by themselves, as types and leaders and standards for the whole; and this, not only in scholarship, but in action and character, in that finished and rounded personality which is the true goal and end of university life. I am thinking now not of one man but of a number who live in my memory, and whom, with the one or two in this community of my contemporaries of the earlier and plastic days, I gratefully and lovingly recall. Those boys had much to do with the real making of Sewanee, as I know, who lived and worked with them. Lawton Wiggins was an ideal student; all of Sewanee passed into and lived in him. While yet an undergraduate he had acted and succeeded in every possible capacity, as tutor, proctor, or what not. The natural steps that followed without break to Assistant Professor, Professor, Vice-Chancellor, efficient, all-absorbent, accepted and acceptable dictator,—all came by such imperceptible, unconscious, and unselfish, un-self-seeking gradations—out of pure oneness with Sewanee as the only self he knew,—that there was nothing in it strange, or possible to be otherwise, to us who followed the process.

That mysterious detective knowledge of all that was going on or being thought of in the Univer-

sity or the community — coupled with a secret and kindly tact in dealing with it — which, like a kind of sixth sense, characterized Tutor or Proctor or Professor or Vice-Chancellor Wiggins in his best days, was no great mystery to those who knew how naturally and wholly he had grown into all that was Sewanee, and all Sewanee into him.

I have not the time — nor is it yet the time — to analyze and measure the unusual personal gifts, powers, and character of Dr. Wiggins, nor yet to balance up the long list of his eminent services to this University. That must be an interesting and important chapter of our permanent history. Nor shall I venture to give voice to the general and common grief and sense of loss that speaks for itself in us all.

More specially I have been requested to represent the Hebdomadal Board this morning, in a moment which must necessarily be fraught with more immediate meaning and concern for them than for any others. I recall the occasion — indeed the exact moment and manner — in which Assistant Professor Wiggins entered and took his modest seat at the foot of the table, around which in one of our primitive rooms, and in those more military days, we sat in strict order of seniority. He was for long a silent, but not long an idle or inefficient member. I watched how quietly and intently he took in and mastered every least detail of university business or interest; how by sheer attention and ability and efficiency he grew into an indispensable

and necessary factor. He and I were the original, infant, Schedule Committee, sitting constantly in the effort to reduce our somewhat intractable material and chaotic instruction to something like system and order. I contributed what of idea or of practice had been ingrained in me at the University of Virginia; he did the rest, and was the rest, in that and other matters, until the coming in of the more modern Faculty. What then and always struck me as characteristic of him was an unusual effacement of self, at least of any intrusion or appearance of self, in matters of public interest or business. That may have been a general characteristic with him, but it was none the less a part of his gradual absorption and loss of himself in the larger life of Sewanee.

Of Dr. Wiggins' gradual rise and final long session at the head of the Hebdomadal Board, I need say nothing among ourselves. This more modern Board has been one with no lack of personal, individual, even variant initiation and independence. There have never hesitated to enter into it all needful differences and discussions of opinion and policy. With a few pardonable and not unamiable or unlovely exceptions, personal feelings, interests, or antagonisms have never entered into it, as occasionally they did in the earlier and harder days. The selfless devotion, the courtesy and consideration, the personal charm and social delicacy and tact of our late Vice-Chancellor were not among the least causes of a unity

and harmony and single-minded devotion to its interests which I cannot but think exceptionally characterizes the governing body of this University.

A pall of gloom rests upon us all; I meet it wherever I turn; I confess that it has so rested upon myself as to have disqualified me for this function. Yet there is another side, on which I think we should sufficiently rise above ourselves to be able to look. There is a dramatic roundness and completeness, an appropriateness and propriety in the moment and the manner of the death we are deploring, which cannot but have impressed us all, which we ought not to overlook or underestimate. Has not our friend chosen the better part, which shall not be taken from him?—He elected to spend himself, and he is spent; he elected to give his life, and it is given. I recall the old saying, that only the Death sets its seal upon—completes and crowns the Life. Surely if ever one died as he had lived, died in the very act of the service he had loved and for which he had lived, it was he whom we are here to mourn. His life was given for us,—let us accept it, thank God, and take heart!

MEMORIAL ODE BY WILLIAM NORMAN GUTHRIE, M.A., ALUMNUS AND DIRECTOR OF THE UNIVERSTY EXTENSION DEPARTMENT

First of us, chosen to lead us,
And followed with faith,
We call to thee!—Hearken and heed us,
Who cheer thee in death.

II

No shame if sorrow hath wrung us
And anxious fears;
For wast thou not boy once among us
Four happy years?

III

Forest and rock hast thou cherished
With filial pride;
For thee budded and bloomed and perished
Our blossom-tide;

IV

Glorious for thee our October
Burned year after year;
Wet winter-woods, wistful and sober,
To thee likewise were dear;

V

White moonlight on twinkling branches;
Stars caught in their mesh;
The far-spreading plains that enfranchise
The eye from the flesh;

VI

From the coves the kine-bells' sweet clanging,
Thou hast broodingly heard;
And the thrushes' and red-birds' haranguing—
Thy fancy hath stirred.

VII

No wonder our heart-beats quicken
As we think of thee now;
Our foremost, unfaltering, stricken—
Death's calm on thy brow!

VIII

Thou foughtest our battles bravely.
And wroughtest for all;
In peril, thou smiledst gravely,
At failure or fall;

IX

With unfailing fidelity ever
Our weakness to hide,
Silent in steadfast endeavor
When doubted, denied.

X

To the right, to the left, thou didst look not,
But thy life thou didst give;
And, wonted to serve, thou couldst brook not
Thy work to outlive.

XI

In the hour of thy weakness not daunted,
Thy brethren were true;
And they proffered thee aid unwanted
Thy duty to do:

XII

But thou hadst thy day's work finished,
Nor bidding farewell:
Thou went'st forth with power undiminished,
So their cheers were thy knell.

XIII

Ha, first of us wert thou chosen
As faithfullest found!
Then how shall thy soul repose in
Mere hallowed ground?

XIV

In us, yea in us, thine abiding,
Thy spirit and life;
Still in our councils presiding,
Allayer of strife;

XV

Alone in great patience sustaining
The brunt of the day;
Thy wisdom, guiding, restraining,
With magnanimous sway;

XVI

For wrongs — thy large forgiving,
For follies — thy grace;
Yea in us, thou in us art still living,
And none shall replace.

XVII

So our selfish sorrow we smother
For thee who art dear;
Who hail thee yet leader and brother
And heartily cheer;

XVIII

By thy faithful spirit new-plighted,
Made strong of thy soul,
We march, thy brothers, united,
Unafraid to thy goal!

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